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Letter dated 31 August 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit a letter dated 31 August 2016 from Najib Ghadbian, Special Representative of the Syrian National Coalition to the United Nations (see annex).

I would be grateful if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Abdallah Y. **Al-Mouallimi**
Permanent Representative

16-15102 (E) 010916

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Annex to the letter dated 31 August 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On behalf of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, it is my honour to transmit to you, as an enclosure to the present letter, a letter dated 31 August 2016 from the President of the Syrian National Coalition, Mr. Anas Al-Abdah, drawing attention to the latest report of the Joint Investigative Mechanism regarding the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

(*Signed*) Najib **Ghadbian**
Special Representative of the
Syrian National Coalition to the United Nations

Enclosure

I am writing in regard to the recent release of the third report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) — United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism on the use of chemical weapons, confirming the Syrian regime's repeated use of chlorine gas as a weapon of war, in violation of Security Council resolutions 2118 (2015), 2209 (2015) and 2235 (2015) and its obligations as a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The evidence is now incontrovertible: the Syrian regime has systematically deployed chemical weapons to terrorize, maim and kill Syrian civilians, and likely retains a hidden chemical weapons programme. The OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) has concluded unequivocally that Syrian Arab Air Force helicopters dropped bombs containing chlorine gas in civilian occupied areas, including Talmenes and Sarmin, Idlib, on 21 April 2014 and 16 March 2015, respectively. The report's conclusions follow those of the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team report, dated 4 July 2016, which state that the Syrian chemical weapons declaration cannot be fully verified as accurate or complete. OPCW investigators have discovered precursors for chemical warfare agents, including soman and VX, at several undeclared facilities — a clear indicator that the Syrian regime has hidden the full extent of its chemical weapons programme and continues to retain the capacity to use chemical weapons against unarmed civilians.

It is imperative that Member States of the Security Council, acting collectively or independently, take measures to hold the Syrian regime accountable. The National Coalition for Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people, reiterates its call on members of the Security Council to assume their responsibilities as set out in the Charter of the United Nations and in repeated Security Council resolutions on Syria. We call on Member States to:

(a) Impose punitive measures under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, as required by Security Council resolutions 2118 (2013), 2209 (2015) and 2235 (2015), sanctioning the Syrian regime for its defiance of international law and its wilful killing of innocent civilians;

(b) Protect civilians from further chemical weapons attacks by employing measures to ground Assad's air forces, which are the primary delivery mechanism for chlorine gas. The enforcement of a no-bombing zone implemented over all of Syria is a feasible, low risk method to stop the bombs and protect civilians without requiring planes in the air or boots on the ground;

(c) Ensure accountability for individuals responsible for the use of chemical weapons by referring the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and taking action under national or universal jurisdiction through individual Member State Governments.

The Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces reaffirms its commitment to the goals of the revolution against injustice, tyranny and the criminality of the Assad regime, as well as our commitment to the establishment of a civil, modern, pluralistic, and democratic state where all Syrians have equal rights and duties regardless of ethnic, sectarian, religious and tribal affiliations. The Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces also reaffirm our commitment to the fight against

terrorism in all its forms. However, we will not defeat terror nor establish a free, democratic Syria while the Assad regime continues to gas civilians with impunity. Syria's civilians need protection from chemical weapons and other internationally banned weapons, as well all indiscriminate airstrikes. Anything less will only condemn more Syrians to death and make a greater mockery of international law.

(*Signed*) Anas **Al-Abdah**
President of the National Coalition of
Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces